



## IUCN Assessment of the Himalayan Wolf

**For Prelims:** Himalayan Wolf, [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)'s Red List](#), [Ladakh and Spiti Valley](#), [Sustainable Development Goals](#), [Aichi Targets](#).

**For Mains:** Reasons for the population decline of Himalayan Wolves, Measures to Protect the Himalayan Wolves, Conservation.

[Source: DTE](#)

### Why in News?

The Himalayan Wolf (*Canis lupus chanco*), a prominent lupine predator found across the Himalayas has been assessed for the first time in the [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)'s Red List](#).

### What Are the Key Facts About Himalayan Wolf?

- **About:**
  - The Himalayan Wolf is a mysterious lupine predator that **inhabits the high elevations of the Himalayas**.
  - Characterized by distinctive genetic markers, its mitochondrial DNA suggests a genetic foundation predating the Holarctic grey wolf.
- **Habitat:**
  - It is found in parts of **China, Nepal, India, and Bhutan** and typically lives in alpine meadows and grasslands at elevations of 10,000 to 18,000 feet.
    - They usually travel in small packs and hunt wild sheep and goats, sometimes even preying on marmots, hares, and birds.
- **Population Status:**
  - Population estimate of **2,275-3,792 mature individuals**, all within a subpopulation across the Himalayan range of Nepal, India, and the Tibetan Plateau.
  - Indian section has 227-378 mature individuals, **primarily in Ladakh and Spiti Valley**.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable
  - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I

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# HIMALAYAN WOLF

CANIS LUPUS HIMALAYENSIS



## What is the IUCN Red List?

- The IUCN Red List is the foremost global resource for assessing the risk of extinction among animals, fungi, and plant species.
- Accessible to all, it serves as a crucial indicator of global biodiversity health, it offers comprehensive insights into species' characteristics, threats, and conservation measures, playing a pivotal role in shaping informed conservation decisions and policies.
- The IUCN Red List Categories define the extinction risk of species assessed. **Nine categories** extend from NE (Not Evaluated) to EX (Extinct). Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU) species are considered to be threatened with extinction.
  - It is also a key indicator for the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and [Aichi Targets](#).
- The IUCN Red List includes the **IUCN Green Status of Species**, which assesses the recovery of species' populations and measures their conservation success.
  - There are **eight Green Status Categories**: Extinct in the Wild, Critically Depleted, Largely Depleted, Moderately Depleted, Slightly Depleted, Fully Recovered, Non-Depleted and Indeterminate.
  - A Green Status assessment examines how conservation actions have affected the current Red List status.

## Why is the Population of Himalayan Wolf Continuously Declining?

- **Habitat Destruction:** The IUCN Red List Assessment has highlighted an ongoing reduction in the area, extent, and quality of habitat for Himalayan wolves.
- **Depredation Conflict:** Depredation conflict is a major conservation concern, given a seasonal or permanent high livestock abundance in wolf habitats that often form summer pastureland for livestock grazing.
  - These conflicts result in a negative attitude towards wolf conservation and often trigger retaliatory killing
- **Hybridization with Dogs:** The report pointed out that a growing problem for Himalayan wolves in Ladakh and Spiti is **interbreeding with domestic dogs**. This is becoming more challenging because there are more feral dogs in these areas.
  - Hybridization can contribute to increased competition for resources, such as territory and prey, between wolves and wolf-dog hybrids.
- **Illegal Hunting:** The wolf is also illegally hunted for **trade in its fur and body parts including**

**paws**, tongues, heads, and other parts. However, hunting of these wolves is not legal in all range states.

## What Measures Should be Taken to Protect the Himalayan Wolves?

- **Secure and Restore:** Securing and restoring healthy wild prey populations and landscapes and setting aside wildlife habitat refuges.
- **Improve Guarding Methods:** Improving livestock guarding methods, such as predator-proof corral pens and **using sustainable livestock herding practices**, including reduced livestock loads, adapted herding, and developing novel but tradition-based holistic management practices will enhance the conservation of wolves.
- **Management of Feral Dog Populations:** By managing the populations of feral dogs, the ecological balance in wolf habitats can be preserved.
- **Transboundary Efforts :** This transboundary interconnectedness is vital for the unimpeded movement of wolf populations and the safeguarding of their natural behaviors, achieved through coordinated research and monitoring initiatives

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. 'Invasive Species Specialist Group' (that develops Global Invasive Species Database) belongs to which one of the following organizations?(2023)**

- (a) The International Union for Conservation of Nature
- (b) The United Nations Environment Programme
- (c) The United Nations World Commission for Environment and Development
- (d) The World Wide Fund for Nature

**Ans: A**

### Mains

**Q. How does biodiversity vary in India? How is the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 helpful in conservation of flora and fauna? (2018)**